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AUTHOR Newman, Richard E.; Miller, Michael T.
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ABSTRACT

This paper traces the regulation of intercollegiate athletics from the late 19th-century to the present and discusses current trends in the supervision of intercollegiate athletics. It examines the emergence of faculty control of athletics and the concept of faculty athletic committees in the late 1800s due to the inability or unwillingness of students to control their own athletic programs. The founding of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in the early 1900s and the results of several inquiries into the nature of college athletics are reviewed. The activities of the American Council of Education (ACE), its Commission of Collegiate Athletics, and the Knight Foundation's Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics to develop minimum academic standards for college athletes are also discussed. The report concludes that in recent years there has been a concerted effort to restore integrity to intercollegiate athletics from within higher education, fueled largely by public criticism of college sports and the threat of governmental intervention. Such efforts have favored a return to institutional control, under uniform NCAA criteria, that would place accountability and responsibility for athletic programs under academically qualified campus personnel. (Contains 22 references.) (MDM)

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A Study of the Historical Academic Control Measures in Intercollegiate Athletics

Dr. Richard E. Newman
Assistant Professor
Department of Physical Education
University of Mary
7500 College Drive
Bismarck, ND 58504
(701) 255-7500
FAX: (701) 255-7687

Dr. Michael T. Miller
Assistant Professor
Department of Administration in Higher Education
206 Wilson Hall
University of Alabama
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487
(205) 348-1170
FAX: (205) 348-2161

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The control of athletic programs in higher education has been scrutinized more critically now than at any other time in recent history. Public polls, for example, have revealed that 78% of the American people believed college athletics were out of control (Sherman, 1992), while 86% of college presidents felt the pressure associated with successful athletic programs "interfere with the primary educational mission of America's schools" (Brownlee & Linnon, 1990, p. 51).

Originally initiated under the regulatory auspices of students themselves, alternative methods of intercollegiate athletic regulation became necessary when student-athletes were no longer capable or willing to control their own athletic programs. Subsequently, "in-house" control procedures were adopted at the institutional level, and after over a century of experimental regulatory processes, reformists have advocated a return to the idea of institutional control of intercollegiate athletic programs. The resulting purpose for conducting this study was to examine the historical precedence of the control of intercollegiate athletic programs.

Historical Control Measures

A struggle over the appropriate control of intercollegiate athletics existed from 1874 to 1898. Faculty control of athletics and the concept of faculty athletic committees emerged during this era because of "the inability or unwillingness of students to control their own athletic programs" (Smith, 1983, p.

372). These early internal regulatory efforts were not consistently effective because of the philosophical differences between students and faculty regarding various program elements. The efforts did, however, establish a trend toward individual institution's control of athletic programs.

Academic leaders in the late-1800's also produced the first attempts at inter-institutional regulation of athletic programs. Efforts were hindered by philosophical differences between leaders at various institutions, but the attempts did produce some guidelines that had significant implications for the future of athletic programs in institutions of higher education. Eligibility standards, academic integrity, amateurism, and role and mission charges affixed to faculty athletic committees were all traced to this era, and specifically to the Brown Conference Report of 1898 (Smith, 1983).

A wake of reform in intercollegiate athletics in the United States surfaced with what has been referred to as the 1905 football controversy. Two opposing factions, the Intercollegiate Athlete Association of the United States and the Intercollegiate Football Rules Committee, met with controversy over restrictions to place football in its "proper perspective," the spirit of rules, and the explicit authority to establish and regulate rules (Lewis, 1975). The controversy cited as "the single most important event in the history of intercollegiate sport" (p. 202), required mediation efforts by President Theodore Roosevelt,

and eventually led to the establishment of the National Collegiate Athletic Association in 1920.

Roosevelt's role in this reform effort has never been completely clarified. According to Lewis (1975), however, the President was neither reformer nor abolitionist. He "used his position in government and his personal power of persuasion" (p. 203) to force the Intercollegiate Football Rules Committee to recognize the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States. Subsequently, in 1906, the members of the Association adopted a constitution and by-laws. Armed with neither legislative nor executive powers, the Association advocated faculty control of athletic programs within its member institutions, and exhorted the educational value inherent in athletics.

> Four years later the name of the Association was changed to the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Thus President Roosevelt should properly be viewed as one of the founding fathers of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (p. 202-203).

A second perceived need for change in America's intercollegiate athletic programs prompted the Carnegie Corporation study, conducted under the direction of Howard J. Savage, in the mid-1920's (Hanford, 1970). The year-long investigation produced a document that "traced the development of college sports and described the unhealthy state of intercollegiate athletics" (p. 353) in higher education.

Within the context of the Savage report was a key theme which suggested that the "defense of the intellectual integrity of the colleges and universities lies with the president and faculty (Thelin & Wiseman, 1989, p. 64). Savage's recommendations for change were largely ignored, however, because they ultimately "had little effect on the direction in which men and events were moving intercollegiate athletics" (Hanford, p. 353).

Intercollegiate athletics remained in relative obscurity until the early-1950's. Concerned about a possible overemphasis on major college sports and the maladies caused by scandals in men's basketball programs, an American Council on Education (ACE) committee conducted an inquiry into the nature of college sports (Hanford, 1979). The group of chief executive officers decided that institutional "presidential attention was needed" (p. 354) into the state of college athletics. Hence, the committee concluded its mission with a set of recommendations aimed at resolving some of the perceived problems associated with 'big-time' college sports. The recommended changes, however, were also ignored by people in athletics who were directing the fate of college athletic programs.

Following a second examination of intercollegiate athletics in higher education, ACE's Commission of Collegiate Athletics developed three policy statements pertinent to the role and responsibilities of athletic directors, presidents, and trustees for the conduct of collegiate athletic programs. Funded by the

Ford Foundation, the commission was mandated to examine the state of American collegiate athletics and "prepare conclusions and recommendations that would aid in their management" (American Council on Education, 1979, p. 345). The committee's position advocated the need for athletic programs that enhanced the primary educational mission of the institution as well as programs that were directed by clearly defined, well-formulated institutional policies. Consequently, the elements of integrity and ethics were repeatedly emphasized in all of the committee's policy statements.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), according to Toner (1984), "was formed in answer to public criticism and national concern about a lack of control at institutions of higher education" (p. 13). Since the Association's founding, it had advocated the basic principle that "athletics must be conducted as an integral part of the dignity and high purpose of higher education" (p. 13).

Proposition 48, a by-product of the ACE's Commission on College Athletics (Zingg, 1983), was initially introduced as a "reasonable" minimal level of academic qualifications for freshman eligibility (Toner, 1984, p. 14). The measure was designed to address the issue of academic integrity and was created, in part, as an effort to quell the mounting controversies surrounding the academic deficiencies of scholarship and questionable academic practices of big-time college athletic powers (Ervin, Saunders, & Gillis, 1984). In

essence, the standard represented an isolated legislative control effort which supported the cornerstone principles of the NCAA.

Proposition 48 was preceded by two other NCAA standards or measures aimed at academic integrity. In 1965, the NCAA adopted the "1.600 Rule" which required college bound high school athletes to achieve a predicted first-year college grade point average of at least 1.66 (c-minus) before they could receive athletic scholarship assistance (Dealy, 1990). During its six year life-span, the measure "noticeably improved the academic caliber of the NCAA athletics" (Dealy, 1990, p. 112).

A "2.00 Rule" was enacted by the NCAA in 1971 and was theoretically intended to be more stringent than the "1.600 Rule," but in effect, proved to be more permissive. The 2.00 Rule required an athlete to have graduated from high school with a C+ or 2.0 grade point average in a specified curriculum or group of core courses. Consequently, the "NCAA weakened rather than strengthened the academic standards of its athletes" (Dealy, p. 112) because the admission of marginally prepared student-athletes was virtually unregulated. Phelps (1982) concurred, noting "the graduation rate for the student athlete has been decreasing consistently since the removal of the 1.600 rule" (p. 14). Proposition 48 was seen as a "reaction to the fact that colleges had stepped out of bounds on the admissions of unqualified student athletes" (Cramer, 1986, p. K1).

The NCAA legislatively permitted a form of 'open enrollment' for student-athletes from 1971 until the implementation of its Proposition 48 in 1986. Academic standards had eroded to the point where gaining admission to colleges and many of these scholarship athletes were "unqualified young men who had no chance, not in the classroom and not for a degree" (Underwood, 1980, p. 41).

Current Control Measures

Research led Sperber (1990) to conclude that the hypocrisy and fiscal irresponsibility associated with 'big-time' college sports represented a "situation that is untenable for American higher education, and a basic redefinition of the role of intercollegiate athletics within the university is absolutely necessary" (p. K2).

The task of reforming intercollegiate athletics is seen as complex, and the processes necessary to enact change are multiple. Certain recurring themes, however, permeated the literature and offered alternatives through which to strengthen the institutional control of athletic programs.

Grant (1979) contended that there has been an erosion of institutional control of intercollegiate athletic programs and institutional authority must be re-established. Atwell (1991) voiced similar feelings in his regulatory approach to reform versus deregulation. Atwell's approach entailed more institutional control by campus chief executive officers as well

as the cooperative support and active involvement of a concerned faculty. Atwell claimed that "faculties have forfeited their role as guardians of academic values" (p. 10), and there is a legitimate need to "regain faculty interest in the oversight of intercollegiate athletics" (p. 11). The primary role of the faculty was viewed as being a defender of "the centrality of the academic enterprise" (p. 11), and as such, the faculty should be actively involved in delineating "what role organized sports do or should play in a holistic academic enterprise subsuming both curricular and co-curricular activities" (p.11).

Weistart (1987) mentioned some alternative intervention agencies that might play a part in the current reform efforts targeted at major college athletics. Aside from increased academic standards and closer institutional oversight or supervision, Congressional involvement, accrediting organizations, and the NCAA were mentioned as possible agents needed to enact major reform efforts in intercollegiate athletic programs. Weistart claimed accrediting organizations held particular promise of control because they were in a position to establish academic standards, require meaningful reporting of academic statistics, or threaten suspension from accreditation should institutions or institutional programs neglect to satisfy their accreditation standards.

The Knight Foundation's Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (1991) echoed many of the sentiments on sports reform expressed by Weistart when it adopted its new model for

intercollegiate athletics. Entitled, "One-Plus-Three," the model's principle components of one centered around the establishment of presidential control of athletic programs. Presidential control, in turn, would be directed toward three critical issues surrounding the current sports reform movement: academic integrity, financial integrity, and independent certification.

Implementation of the Knight Commission's recommendations needed the support and approval of a body possessing the legislative power or authority to enact change. Impetus for change was provided by the Presidents Commission of the NCAA, college and university presidents, and governing boards (Knight Foundation Commission of Intercollegiate Athletics, 1992). Presidential control of college sports programs was beginning to emerge in the decade of the 1990's and the primary focus of CEO control was immediately directed at legislative measures designed to promote the concept of academic integrity in intercollegiate athletic programs.

Dickason (1979) presented a projected view of collegiate athletics for the year 2000. His predictions were based on the opinions, views, and forecasts of the American Council of Education's seven member Commission on Collegiate Athletics and eleven of its liaison representatives. The regulation of athletics rendered some futuristic projections that were clearly aligned with some of the current reform discussions. For

example, regarding college athletic programs and possible governmental intervention, Dickason stated:

> Unless the voluntary associations (NCAA, NAIA, and NJCAA) are more successful than in the past, federal government regulation will affect, and possibly interfere with the administration of collegiate sports activities. Government cannot do it better, but government will do it more unless extraordinary efforts by the associations are made to resolve differences and proceed with a rational resolution of these concerns (p. 506-507).

Discussion

The control of intercollegiate athletic programs has followed a cyclical pattern in colleges and universities. Begun under the auspices of students and gradually shifting to the faculty and faculty athletic committees, this responsibility evolved toward inter-institutional controls in the form of conference or national rules and regulations. This was evident in the growth of prestigious athletic conferences and the creation of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Athletic conferences and voluntary associations (such as the NCAA) have been primarily regulated by athletic directors and faculty athletic representatives of member institutions. As such, faculty control of athletic programs was 'delegated' to a specialized segment of the faculty who had a primary interest,

care, and concern for only one portion of the institution's total educational role and mission.

Inter-institutional supervision has remained the dominant locus of control over the past seventy years. Present reform advocates, however, have noted that the control of athletic programs needs to be returned to the institutions. An unconditional authority for governing such programs needs to rest with the president of each institution and should become a shared responsibility of governing boards and faculty to cooperatively assist in the assumption of this task.

Current trends, in fact, represent core themes in the "One-Plus-Three" model of sports reform advocated by the Knight Foundation's Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (1991). The Commission has repeatedly expressed a need for unconditional presidential control of athletic programs, ranging from the NCAA to on-campus governance, as well as institutional accountability of athletic programs. Accountability, especially in the areas of academic and fiscal integrity, has been a driving force behind recent NCAA legislative efforts and pilot programs directed toward a comprehensive certification program of member institutions (Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 1991; 1992; 1993).

The Knight Foundation's Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics projected three possible futures for college sports: higher education would restore integrity from within its own bounds, soundness would be imposed externally and college sport

would be regulated by governmental controls, or unchecked abuses would spread, destroying not only the intrinsic value of intercollegiate athletics but higher education's claim to a high moral ground (Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 1991).

Research has indicated that there has been a concerted effort to restore integrity from within higher education and the reform efforts have been hastened by public criticism of college sports and the impending threat of governmental intervention. Trends in control measures have favored a return to institutional control. Self-regulation, under NCAA criteria, would place the accountability and responsibility of athletic programs under the jurisdiction of academically qualified campus personnel. The NCAA would regulate the uniformity of certification standards, but certification criteria appeared to be evolving from its President Commission. Thus, to assure a solid future for college athletics, institutions of higher education must take the lead in working through various agencies and constituencies, building consensus, to establish a much needed and desired integrity in intercollegiate athletics.

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